



(U) Permanent Career Switch: From Investments to Intelligence

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We asked SID employees to tell us how it is they came to work at NSA (see [announcement](#)). Here's one such story, of a move from the investment world to NSA... (U)

(U//FOUO) PCS - To most people, those initials mean "Permanent Change of Station," but in my life, those initials triggered a "Permanent Career Switch." I married a career Agency employee in the middle of my ten-plus years in the investment field, an exciting job that was on the pulse of the stock and bond markets and tracking their reactions to world events.

(U//FOUO) I had moved to that job after four and a half years in the banking industry where I had quickly moved from mortgage application processing to placing orders on the bank's stock, bond, and option investments -- and my first taste of the high-paced world of the stock market. Due to the nature of our jobs, neither my husband nor I could discuss our jobs with each other, so our dinnertime conversations never included what we were doing at the office. It was a mutual agreement and obligation due to our careers that we faithfully upheld.

(U//FOUO) We had settled into this routine for about five years when the news came that his mission was moving to our fiftieth state. That left me with few options. My employer had no offices outside the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area and research on job prospects in the new location indicated that jobs connected to the stock market involved reporting to work by 3:00 a.m. to correspond to the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange. With a newborn baby in our household, that just wasn't an option. We inquired about spousal employment in the field and just days before our plane departed for Oahu, I finished the preliminary interviews and testing for Agency employment.

(U//FOUO) After waiting a year for the background investigation to conclude, I got called for an interview that resulted in a job offer. I worked the remaining two years of our field tour filling a vacancy in the Admin office, and returned to the Fort Meade area to a job more closely aligned to my prior experience with investments and money - the acquisition field. Over the next eleven years, I eagerly took on additional responsibilities, but the excitement of the stock market still nagged at me. The work I was doing was routine and, even though I had many responsibilities, the challenge of following the market reactions to current events was still missing.

(U//FOUO) Then on September 11, 2001, everything changed. Within weeks, I took on the business support to crucial systems directly involved in the Counterterrorism and GWOT* efforts. The excitement of seeing immediate impact of my efforts to ensure our development systems had the necessary equipment to go into full production nearly overnight matched the excitement I felt from working in the investment field. I had found my niche.

(U//FOUO) Over the next few months, the job evolved from a support role to more of a program management role due to the duties I took on to best support the mission. Just last year, I transferred from Acquisition to SID to take on the job title to match the actual job I had been doing. September 11, 2001, was indeed the worst tragedy we'd seen on U.S. soil; but for many people, including me, it also provided an opportunity to excel and exhibit the best this country has to offer. I am very proud to contribute to the defense of this great country -- an opportunity I would have never had if the initials "PCS" hadn't triggered that change in our lives and spurred me to seek employment at NSA.

*(U) Notes:

GWOT = Global War on Terrorism

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